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# ILLUMINER

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## DIVORCE RATE increasing in India



**I**N INDIA, THERE ARE OVER 10 MILLION MARRIAGES each year, equating to 20 million people get married. Almost all these couples anticipate living happily ever after. However, only a small group of couples continue in a harmonious relationship. Sadly, research shows that the divorce rate among Indians is increasing among young married couples. 60% of marriages are unhappy. In our community, over one third of couples are dissatisfied with their partner and their marriage. Many are suffering with little to no help. I have spent the last 25 years of my life counseling couples whose dreams of a happy marriage have been shattered due to: personality differences, intimacy issues, lack of communication, in-law's issues, financial issues, and sickness, to name a few.

Kerala, known to be the most literate state has experienced an increase of divorce rate by 350% in the last 10 years. Many couples feel empty, lonely, and in conflict with each other. According to Professor Stanley at the University of Denver, "young couple marrying for the first time today has a lifetime divorce risk of 40 percent, "unless current trends change significantly."

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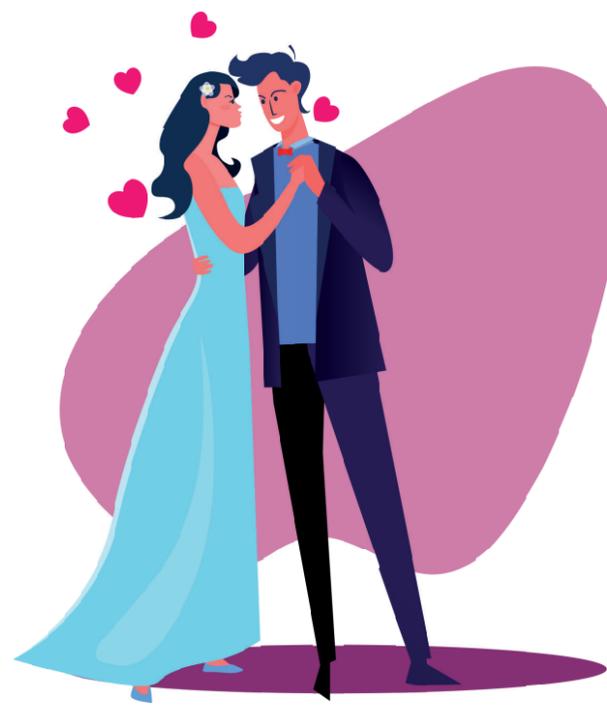
**NOVEMBER- Finances: Luke 12:15, Hebrews 13:5**

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**THEREFORE  
WHAT GOD  
HAS JOINED  
TOGETHER,  
LET NOT MAN  
SEPARATE.**

Matthew 19:6



FROM THE  
**editor**

# GIVE YOUR HAND, IF HEART IS RIGHT

**“The realization of his identity led Adam to choose to select none by sight, but wait for One to give him the one by insight for a helpmeet, and to awaken love to the right one and only one.”**

**M**arriage designed by God involves a man and a woman who give their hands and hearts to one another to live life together. Living together is not merely two physical bodies staying together but involves two minds and spirits being united into one. Marriage involves two hearts and two bodies becoming one. The “becoming one from two” process succeeds the “being one in God.” In “being the one,” Adam firstly finds his identity in God, which he applies to the work God instructed. His identity in God (image and likeness) results in Adam not finding anyone comparable to him amongst the cattle, birds, and beasts God made. The realization of his identity led Adam to choose to select none by sight, but wait for One to give him the one by insight for a helpmeet, and to awaken love to the right one and only one.

Giving the right hand to another in covenant commitment should be done only if the heart is right with the other person's heart. This “rightness” of the heart

involves the straight, pleasing, and upright connection with the other. Heart will be right only if it is set on the other to think for mutual progress, peace, and prosperity practically. If the heart is already given to someone else, then the hand should not be given to a new person since the hand will eventually try to set itself free from the stranger in order to follow the heart. If the heart is given only to possessions, then the hand should not be given to a person to have and to hold, in sickness and in health.

Journey on the chariot as newlyweds will grow into an expansion of influence and impact over the course of married life when one heart finds in the other a treasure to keep. The increase or decrease (sickness or health, richer or poorer) of the treasure does not influence the person since Adam's life itself is given to Eve to keep the treasure the heart found. Journey together in the same direction to attain the same purpose (of glorifying God by doing the right things) is possible if hearts are upright to one another before hands are joined.



## Christian Family as Agent of Change

Different cultures, religious traditions, and people groups around the world have diverse and interesting practices in connection with marriage. In Indonesia, the newly wedded couple must confine themselves to their home without using the toilet for three days. In China, a prospective husband will shoot his bride with a bow and (headless) arrow several times, then collect and break them during the ceremony. After getting married, couples in Germany are presented with a large log and a saw. These symbolic practices indicate how different cultures and traditions perceive marriage. Despite their differences, they have some common elements that highlight the significance of the most intimate relationship:

- The bond between the couple
- The longevity of the relationship
- Overcoming obstacles together in anticipation of happiness and success

However, the present world is witnessing unprecedented erosion of the value and significance of marriage faster than ever before. Studies reveal that the divorce rate among believers is alarmingly higher than among non-believers ([www.barna.com](http://www.barna.com); [www.pewforum.org](http://www.pewforum.org)). The Pew study shows that the numbers are much higher among those who believe in God, regularly attend prayer meetings and fellowship than those who do not believe in God or regularly attend religious meetings. It is ironic to see marriages breaking down among born-again believers while Christ-centered family life is integral to their belief in God.

The surging tide of postmodernity does influence the believers as they encounter technological advancement and social changes. While they strive to conform to static demands of faith, their participation in society challenges them to deal with the constant flux of numerous aspects of life. The change of marriage from a religious ceremony to a civil affair is one of the major changes that contributed to the increase in the number of civil marriages in the last few decades in the West. Similarly, the number of live-in relationships is increasing in India. The perception of patriarchy as a social evil directly impinges on the Christian view of marriage that is predominantly presented as patriarchal. Additionally, women's socio-economic freedom and equal status with men have contributed to the current concept of family.

Heraclitus of Ephesus (500 BC), a Greek Philosopher, was the one who first proposed that "life is flux." He added that logos infuse this natural change (logos neither created this world nor can bring it to an end, according to him). Resisting this change causes suffering. On the contrary, Buddha, who lived around the same period in India, too observed the same reality, but he proposed detachment from them to escape from suffering. Christian faith provides a robust foundation to deal with changes. It is neither yielding, resisting or detaching from it, rather radically engaging with it without compromising the core values of the Christian life. Jesus' incarnation as human and his engagement with his society did not hamper his mission on earth; instead, it established a practical model of this radical engagement. In the letter to Ephesians, Paul presents Christ as the agent who unifies everything (1:10). In chapter four, he portrayed the corporal unity between Christ and the church (4:16). Finally, in the following chapter, he presented Christ as the paramount example of sincere love between husband and wife and unconditional mutual submission as the foundation of Christian marriage. Therefore, the goal of the family is to be a catalyst for positive change in society by imbibing the model of Christ.

"The goal of the family is to be a catalyst for **positive change in society by imbibing the model of Christ.**"



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# MÖDEL MARRIAGE: SUGGESTED GUIDELINES

**THIS IS A COMPILATION OF PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR YOUNG ADULTS WHO ARE WAITING PATIENTLY TO ENTER INTO ANOTHER PHASE OF THEIR LIFE. THE WRITER SUGGESTS PRAYER AS THE GREATEST SOURCE OF GUIDANCE THAN ANY OTHER INFORMATION.**



# “Marriage at Best is an Imperfect relationship of two Imperfect People” – D. H. Small



ommunities all over the world have gone through radical changes socially, spiritually, and materially over the past three decades. As the third and fourth generations of the Christian community who are born and brought up in a totally different culture are now ready to enter into family life, there has been an increasing concern over the fast-changing practices of the choice of partners, as well as the actual wedding ceremony. Lack of written guidelines or consensus among churches of similar doctrinal and practical beliefs cause almost chaotic situations sometimes to emerge in wedding ceremonies. Blatant violations of Biblical standards have happened primarily from ignorance about what one stands for and why one stands for what he/she stands for. Apart from the cultural and generational differences, what is seriously lacking in our communities is a set of written guidelines based on biblical patterns and conservative Christian traditions. An effort to address these concerns has been made here. It is suggested that Pastors, parents, and young men and women take these guidelines seriously and follow a pattern that will bring glory and honor to our eternal bridegroom.

## **PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE**

Family is the primary Building Block of Society. From the beginning of time, the primary purposes of Marriage have been Companionship (Genesis 2:18), Procreation or Establishment of a Home (Genesis 1:28), and Sexual Fulfillment (the two shall become one). These purposes have and will not change until the end of time. The three core elements of the

fulfillment of these purposes are Severance, Permanence, and Perfect Union as outlined in Genesis 2:24. The starting step hence is to FIND the helpmate that God has prepared. The million-dollar question then is: - How to Find One's Better Half? This is where conflicts have arisen between generations and wrong choices have been made resulting in disastrous outcomes.

## **CHOICE OF PARTNER**

God alone can lead a man or a woman to the person best suited to be their life partner. In fact, He is eager to do so if we allow Him. Understand the fact that Eve was presented to Adam personally autographed by God. There is ONLY ONE LIFE PARTNER for the vast majority of Christians. Marriage is a Heterosexual Covenant, between One Man and One Woman, sealed by a Biblical Ceremony, Consummated in Sexual union for a Lifelong relationship. This must be the hallmark of every Christian marriage. Hence, the partner is NOT ONE's choice, NOT THE PARENTS' choice, but GOD's choice.

**PRAYERFUL APPROACH** – Young men and women, as they enter into adulthood must earnestly seek God's guidance in finding the right person for them for the long-lasting covenant of marriage. Whether practically arranged by parents or the partners themselves, the first and foremost prerequisite is seeking God's will through Prayer. This will lead to friends, family, circumstances, and other situations that clearly confirm God's will before one commits to saying, 'I do'. Remember, there is nothing 'unholy' about finding God's Choice, in a 'Holy fellowship'. Trust God spend time in Prayer, and wait patiently for His time. Commitment should never PRECEDE Confirmation.

- Once you get a confirmation that you have 'found' your partner – ask God to show you the character of the man/woman
- Make every effort to find out all you can about this person from other believers so that you can pray intelligently about this matter

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT** – Whoever is involved in practically arranging for the man and woman to meet, and seek confirmation of God's will, parental involvement in the most important chapter in their children's lives is extremely crucial. If parents were not involved in the initial 'finding' process, convey the proposal to the parents immediately after ascertaining 'God's Will'. The parents and the young man or woman together must come to a loving and prayerful understanding about it.

- Pray that God will convince your parents about 'God's Choice' in your life
- Wait until they approve, 'if you are certain that you made the RIGHT choice and if your parents are believers', and continue to PRAY
- If there is still resistance and disapproval, RE-CHECK your 'GUIDANCE'
- If parents are unbelievers, they disapprove of your choice and you ascertained 'God's will' there is no need to wait indefinitely. However, make your best efforts not to hurt the feelings of the parents as much as you can.

**COMPATIBILITY** – Compatibility is an important component of a healthy and godly choice

- Spiritual – The partner chosen must be of the same 'faith' as you are. The Bible is very clear about the warning on 'getting unequally yoked to unbelievers' (2nd Corinthians 6:14). "if you as a believer marry an unbeliever, the devil is your father-in-law" (Zac Poonen). Beware of the plans of 'conversion' after marriage! History proves a 'reverse effect' in most of the cases.





- Emotional – For compatibility in marriage, the same should permeate the emotional realm as well. God’s choice for you will be of the ‘same mental age’ as you are. This does not mean that the partner must be a ‘yes man’ or ‘yes woman.’ Walter Trobisch in ‘I loved a Young woman’ states, “She must challenge me to the highest, through absolutely honest criticism of me; When she is disappointed in me, she must never withdraw her confidence; Untiringly she must help to overcome my weak sides, and She must never pretend but must tell me honestly when I have hurt her”.
- Physical – Chemistry between partners is absolutely essential for a long-lasting relationship. This can include the height or in other words overall physique of both partners. Age, health (especially heredity, mental health), etc. are other areas that need to be paid attention to. Both partners should be honest with each other prior to the ‘commitment phase’ about these aspects.
- Social – Two individuals from similar backgrounds especially in relation to family backgrounds, financial status, education, culture, etc. are a better match than two individuals from strikingly dissimilar social strata even though there may be exceptions to this. Many times, some marriages are carried out across the above-stated boundaries merely to prove that Christians are above such differences. Marriage is not one that can be risked to PROVE a POINT. A good background check done prior to the engagement and making wedding plans may save a lot of grief later.
- Interpersonal Relationships – An individual’s interpersonal relationships in family, church, and society will clearly portray a picture of how that person will relate to the spouse and other members of the extended family.
- Clean Pre-Marital Life – Holiness and separation are outward visible signs of a person who is saved, and water baptized. Hence, the partners are to keep themselves holy from any form of sexual immorality. If there are affairs or relationships that haunt the individual, the same must be communicated prior to making a commitment to say ‘I do’
- Race and Ethnicity – History proves that interracial marriages in any society have had a short shelf life. Language, cultural, social differences among family members cause unnecessary tension that eventually leads to a painful breakup in many cases. Hence, the commonality of Race and Ethnicity of the partners lessen the stressful variables in the complexity of marriage.

## COURTSHIP

Courtship and Dating are not Biblical words. However, there are many examples of Courtship in the Bible (Jacob and Rachel, Joseph, and Mary, etc.). Courtship is often misinterpreted in our community. If presented with clarity and practiced with conviction, courtship will help solve some major issues that prevail in the community. What happens in courtship after the ‘choice’ has been made?

### Discern commonality of spirits

1. Is this person spiritually regenerated? John 3:1-6
2. Take time to observe their values and attitudes. (Matt. 7:16)
3. Will they pray with you? ... Study the Scripture? ... Attend church?
4. Seek the counsel of a pastor or spiritual leader.

### Determine the correlation of minds

5. Are there common interests?
6. Do you share “the mind which is in Christ Jesus?” (Phil. 2:5)
7. Is there a common desire to “renew the mind?” (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23)

### Discover concerns of emotions

8. Don’t start with “feelings;” these should be a by-product.
9. Are your affections directed toward the highest well-being of the other person?
10. Do you detect anger, fear, jealousy, pride, etc.?

### Develop commitments of wills

11. Are there common objectives and priorities?
12. Discuss short-range and long-range goals. Career choices.
13. Is there a mutual decision to follow God’s leading together?

### Desire companionship of bodily presence

14. Desire to share recreation, entertainment, social occasions in each other’s company within the parameters of God’s Holiness Laws.
15. Communication; communication; communication!
16. Premarital sexual relationships are contrary to God’s intent. (I Cor. 6:12-20).

## WEDDING CEREMONY

**Planning** – Planning a wedding ceremony takes a lot of effort. Always remember that the wedding is an event and marriage is a lifetime and hence planning for the marriage should never be overlooked when planning the wedding ceremony and related matters. Some key areas that are usually overlooked in today’s weddings are

- PRAYER – The same way as partners and families pray for a suitable helpmate, the prayers should continue to have a blessed wedding ceremony. More than anyone else, the partners must spend more time in prayer upholding every aspect of the ceremony.
- FAMILY INVOLVEMENT – Parents and siblings of both partners must consult each other before making a final decision about the actual ceremony and reception
- LOCAL CHURCH INVOLVEMENT – At the very least, the local Pastor must know the programs for both the ceremony and reception ahead of time to avoid unnecessary and unpleasant surprises. This includes any culturally related programs that the bride and the groom want to include in their wedding ceremony. The local Pastor should have an opportunity to weigh the pros and cons of the suggestions both from a Biblical and a cultural/traditional perspective so that an amicable common ground can be found.

**CEREMONY** – Modesty should be the hallmark of a Christian wedding ceremony. We live in an era where extravagance has become the focal point of our wedding ceremonies and receptions. This is certainly contrary to the Biblical lifestyle expected from a Christian.

- **APPROACH THE CEREMONY WITH REVERENCE** – The bride and groom, members of the wedding party, and everyone else entrusted with any function must approach the ceremony with reverence to the presence of God and must respect the audience in everything they do.
- **WEDDING PARTY** – Both parties should try to avoid any non-Christian persons for the wedding ceremony in the capacity of groomsmen and bridesmaids. If that's not possible, at the very least, everyone who has some function to carry out during the ceremony must be well informed about the solemnity of the occasion.
- **DRESS CODE** – Whether in the traditional Indian attire or in the more contemporary gowns, the Bride and the maids must wear clothes that sufficiently cover all body parts in a decent manner as pleasing unto the Lord. No revealing clothes must be permitted.
- **SONGS** – All songs chosen for the ceremony must be glorifying Christ. No secular songs that depict love in a worldly sense only, must be allowed to be sung at the ceremony.
- **MINISTRY OF THE WORD** – The word of God has paramount importance in any Christian function and marriage is no exception. There must at least be 10-15 minutes set apart for an anointed minister of the gospel who is proven to address a mixed audience to share the word of God. The delivery of God's word must be in contemporary and understandable language. The occasion should in no way be used to disparage the practices of other faiths and must focus **ONLY** on glorifying Christ.
- **LENGTH OF PROGRAM** – Do not oversaturate the ceremony with messages, songs, introductions, announcements, and prayers. The entire length of the program from the processional to the recessional should take no longer than 90 minutes. Avoid repetitive prayers and reading of scriptures to accommodate the invited guests or ministers present.
- **FOOD** – The invited guests must always be kept in mind while choosing the type of food served at a wedding. As most of the invitees are people of Indian origin, a few well-liked Indian snacks or entrees are preferable to be included either during the cocktail hour or when the main course is served. It is recommended that a mix of American and Asian food items is the best-balanced approach. Always bear in mind that people who have driven for miles to get to the wedding must not go back starving. This includes the timeliness of serving food as well. Sometimes, people focus too much on the speeches and festivities and guests are left starving for extended periods of time.
- **PROGRAMS FOR RECEPTION** – It is a time of celebration. However, no one should forget that the same presence of God that was at the ceremony is expected to be there during the reception as well.
  - Never serve any alcoholic beverages.
  - Off-color jokes that compromise the principles of the Christian faith must not be allowed.
  - The music chosen for the reception must be free of any sexual, satanic, and anti-Christian innuendo.
  - Disco and other non-Christian traditions of pagan origin must be strongly discouraged.

## **AFTER THE CEREMONY**

**SECURITY** is the primary component of the success of a marriage. Do I feel safe with him/her? How will he/she feel or react when I share some of my secrets or some of my needs? The more intimate the relationship is, the safer you feel. It cannot be achieved overnight.

**HONOR** is the second key component in the success of a marriage. Your mate is personally autographed by your creator. Try to fit into Adam's shoes and see how he felt when God presented Eve to him. See the value of your mate through honor by action. Become a student of your mate. Know each other's needs, likes, and dislikes well. Cultivate security through intimacy and honor each other through action. There are four stages to a marriage relationship where these two components come into play at one stage or the other.

**INFATUATION STAGE** – Everything is bright and sunny

**POST RAPTURE** – Soon after infatuation, the plane will land somewhere. This is where the real partner is revealed to each other

**DISCOVERY** – The post-rapture stage leads you to a discovery stage where the actual meaning of saying 'I love you' is revealed through actions. How 'safe' am I is gauged really well at this stage

**CONNECTION STAGE** – Once the intimacy and security is cultivated, honor marks the connection stage effective especially when the couple is connected to their power source

## **MAKE 5 PROMISES TO EACH OTHER**

- Confirm your beliefs to God's truths
- Be filled with God – Make him the centerpiece
- Find God's best in every trial – stop the blame game
- Serve each other all your living days
- Communicate with Love

## **AVOID 4 MARRIAGE KILLERS**

- Withdrawal from each other when confronted with an issue
- Escalation of an argument
- Belittling the spouse in front of others
- Fostering False Beliefs

Ruth Graham was once asked, "Did you ever contemplate Divorce"? Her answer was, "Murder Yes, Divorce, No". Remember; it is a Long, Long journey!! Ask for God's Grace to sustain your relationship.



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Leslie Verghese, a Psychotherapist by profession, currently works as the Pastor of Assembly of God Dallas and also as the Executive Director of Agape Partners International, an organization that works primarily among the Indian Diaspora to help individuals and families. Leslie holds a PhD from Cornerstone University in Counseling and has a Master's degree in Social Work. In his secular job, he works as a Case Manager for the Baylor Scott and White Health. He is residing in Dallas, Texas with his wife Jessy and children.



## BECOMING ONE FLESH: IMAGING THE HOLY TRINITY IN MARRIAGE

**T**he Biblical concept of marriage transcends mere physical and social realms. It is a divine agency on earth that embodies the trinitarian communion of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. When God created man and woman in His image and united them in holy matrimony, He implanted the very seed of trinitarian life. Therefore, becoming one flesh while still being two distinct individuals reveals the mystery of the Trinity. Here, “one” (echad in Hebrew) does not mean an absolute one but a unified one. That means echad maintains the distinctiveness of each person and unity of persons in an equilibrium. Neither the individuality of persons overtakes the unity, nor does the unity overtake the distinctiveness of the individuals. In patristic theology, this trinitarian relationship is called *perichoresis*. McGrath notes that perichoresis “allows the individuality of the persons to be maintained while insisting that each person shares in the life of the other two.” (McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. p.325). The Greek word *perichoresis* is derived from *peri*, meaning ‘round about,’ and from *chorein*, meaning ‘making room for another.’ The literal expression of this term means ‘making room for one another around oneself.’

Christian marriage is, therefore, a divine institution that is called to reflect the “perichoretic” relations of the triune God. In holy matrimony, God has called us into a covenantal relationship to help make others what God wants them to be. Thus, by remaining in a communion of love, marriage becomes a dynamic process of helping to identify each other’s distinctiveness and purposes for family and the broader communities outside. Sadly, what happens in most marriages is, for the

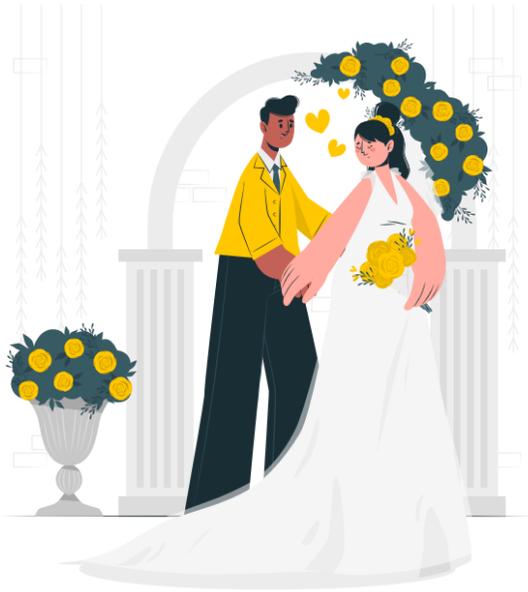
“By remaining in a communion of love, marriage becomes a dynamic process of helping to identify each other’s distinctiveness and purposes for family and the broader communities outside.”

sake of unity the God-given individuality of persons is suppressed. One becomes a slave of the other and lives under the dominion for the rest of one’s life. Sometimes the opposite also happens; two remain two even after marriage for not willing to relinquish their selfish identities. Becoming one flesh is coming into a communion: a communion of love. Love not only makes them “one” but also helps receive each person in their totality and create room for each other. Christian marriages should understand and act upon this trinitarian principle to build healthy family relations in a world full of challenges.



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Rev. Jackson Kurien is an ordained Pastor and Bible Teacher. He also serves as the Mission Director at Fellowship Ashram Church of India. He holds M.Th (Laidlaw College, New Zealand), and M.A in Sociology (Karnataka University, India). He lives in Auckland, New Zealand with his wife Reny and two children, and teaches at Ebenezer Pentecostal church.



## Marriage: God's gift to humanity

**“...let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband”.**  
(Ephesians 5:33, NKJV)

**M**arriage is a *divinely ordained* institution, deeply rooted in a *covenantal relationship* where a husband and his wife complement and complete each other. God founded this union of man and woman where they are treated as one (Gen. 2:24). No other relationship between human beings is so intimate as that of husband and his wife when they stay united as God intends them to be.

A covenant is an agreement, usually formal, between two or more persons to do or not do something specified (dictionary.com). In biblical terms, covenants hold greater significance as they form the foundational tool that God has designed to structure his divine will. The Bible teaches that the Lord is a witness between husband and wife and the woman is man's companion and wife by covenant (Mal. 2:14). God structured marriage as a covenant for a *lifelong commitment and a unifying contract* that cannot be broken.

The Scripture paints marriage as the most significant human relationship and equates its love and commitment to the relationship between Christ and the church (Eph. 5:31-32). As the church is united to Christ, the woman becomes united to the man as one body through *marriage*. Then, the man never again lives only for himself, nor the woman only for herself. A new unity in diversity is formed, and a new family is established through the marital covenant. In a healthy relationship, each spouses' God-given identity and personality are not lost. Instead, both complement each other to grow together and fulfill each one's life purposes intended by God. As the two unique people agree to walk together through life's journey, they get unified as one with a new *shared identity*.

If marriage is what God intended it to be, it would be like a perfect blend of love and respect exhibited by both the husband and the wife. Paul, in his epistle to Ephesians, specifies each spouse's responsibilities in a marital relationship. He advises the wife to *submit to her husband as to the Lord* (5:22) and *respect him*. At the same time, he encourages the husband to *love his wife* in the same manner as *Christ's sacrificial love* for the church (5:25). Earlier in the chapter, Paul instructs every child of God to love and submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph.5:21). As children of God, if a man and his wife love, respect, submit and be considerate to one another, marriage emerges to be the most beautiful experience in their life. The Bible unequivocally emphasizes the importance of marital love and faithfulness. Yet, we often find the contrary and unsuccessful marriages.

Marriage is not the idea of man. It is a divine institution, and we must approach it with utmost care and commitment. According to Max Lucado, *“God created marriage. No government subcommittee envisioned it. No social organization developed it”*. *Marriage was conceived and born in the mind of God.* When God saw Adam in solitude, He decided to provide him a “helpmeet” (a helper suited to, worthy of, or corresponding to him) as it was not suitable for him to be alone (Gen.2:18). As the heavenly Father, God knows what is best for His children, and He designed marriage with

the purpose of faithful companionship and procreation of godly offspring (Mal. 2:15).

*Effective communication, mutual understanding, forgiveness, trust, and supportiveness* are essential for success in marriage. In the *‘Five Love Language’* series, Dr. Gary Chapman gives practical advice to spouses to express and receive love through five primary love languages: *quality time, words of affirmation, receiving gifts, acts of service, and physical touch*. As a Christian marriage counselor, he reveals that in every troubled marriage, one or both partners can take positive steps to change the emotional climate of marriage.

As God's beloved children, we should be imitators of God and love each other as Christ loved us (Ephesians 5:1,2). This, when applied to married life, help the couple to appreciate the deep and wonderful meaning of marriage, relish life's most beautiful journey and attain fulfillment in life.

**“If marriage is what God intended it to be, it would be like a perfect blend of love and respect exhibited by both the husband and the wife.”**



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Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia

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## QUEEN ESTHER & KING AHASUERUS - A TALE OF AN IMPERFECT MARRIAGE

“In marriage, there is the need for forgiveness and grace, honesty and communication, and love and acceptance.”

King Ahasuerus on his part could have reacted in anger and accused his Queen of being deceitful. He could have chosen to divorce her considering he divorced his previous wife because he was displeased with her. Instead, he listens to her. He doesn't question her or accuse her. The king understands the depth of what his wife is trying to tell him and takes appropriate action. And it is this approach that reveals his commitment to his marriage.

If this royal couple's marriage teaches us anything, it is the importance of understanding that marriage requires us to place God front and center in all seasons of our life. It is an example of a marriage that shows us the need for forgiveness and grace, honesty and communication, and love and acceptance. It is a marriage that is not perfect by any means, but it is the imperfections that provide us with great learning moments.

**E**sther - she was not a woman of high means or great status. We know nothing really of her background or family history, save for the fact that she was a Jewish woman who was raised by her cousin, Mordecai after she became an orphan. Except for her beauty, not much else is initially said about her character either. So, when she is selected queen by King Ahasuerus, one wonders if she has the makings of a good queen and a good wife especially considering she was not honest about her identity. It seemed that this marriage had all the red flags of a divorce in the making. But the events that follow show us how we underestimated Queen Esther and in doing so, they paint the picture of a marriage that is built on prayer, communication, and commitment.

When Queen Esther finds out from Mordecai that her people are in trouble, she does two things:

1. She instructs her people to fast and pray with her for three days before she approaches her husband with her request. She was a woman who believed in the power of prayer and the importance of presenting one's request to God.
2. She is well aware that approaching her husband to intercede on behalf of her people did not necessarily bode well for her marriage. Yet, she goes to him with the truth and communicates her needs. She knew this would be a difficult conversation to have and even says “if I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16), but she casts her anxiety aside and proceeds with it anyway.



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## MARITAL Life - A Blessing



**In** the olden days, relationships between married couples were treated so sacred that their relation was bonded with commitment and sacrifice. Compared to that situation, there are marriages now being solemnized, which have become just rituals for celebration for both bride and bridegroom and the gathering. After a while, it will become a waste of time as it will invariably lead to a breakup. As soon as the honeymoon days are over, both the man and his wife will start uttering the word 'divorce' because both of them find marital life disagreeable.

Confrontation starts soon after marriage, and it makes a deep dent in the psyche as both of them remain stubborn to make sure that their arguments are right. Irrespective of people, who are God-loving or unbelievers, the situation is almost the same. Many factors lead to the crack in marital relations. Friendship won over social media platforms is one of the reasons behind the misunderstanding. The problem starts when either of the newlywed couples gets advice from the newly found friends from the social media by implicitly trusting these friends. It is very unfortunate that in due course of time, the situation will get worse among God-loving and born-again believers. Most importantly, they forget that in the

ideal/perfect marital life, self-love or self-interest has no place.

The modern concept of marital life is awkward in the sense that whatever the partner does should be respected. Here, the love and relationship expressed are purely based on the worldly gift that one person gives to another. Thus, it has to be purely a materialistic relationship. It may be borne in mind that in the past, the husband was the head of the family and worked hard and earned money for running the family. But now, to fulfill unending and unnecessary needs, both husband and wife start making money, and the spiritual definition of the head of the family remains unfulfilled. However, nobody must be treated as a slave in the family. Both husband and wife have equal and vital roles to play in marital life. After all, God has demarcated and assigned roles for man and woman, particularly for husband and wife, and these roles should not be interchanged in marital life.

The first love in marriage is lost somewhere even though couples say they still love their partners from the bottom of their hearts. This is a hypocritical stance, which is exactly akin to the situation wherein we had lost our first love with God since when we came to God and accepted Him as our savior. No love is greater than the love of God, and even if we say we

have lost our first love with God, our God still loves us.

When problems pop up in the marital relationship, we must know that they are being brought in by Satan. At this juncture, it may be recalled that the same situation happened in the garden of Eden, where God directed Adam and Eve to walk as per His instructions, but Satan enticed Eve into sinning against the will of God. Their disobedience resulted in a long-lasting drift from the love of God, which is still reflected in love between people, especially between man and woman. So long as we live with our material objectives, love and harmony will elude us, and our life will become peace-less. So, to have a peaceful and complacent life, first, we should return and enter into the everlasting relationship with God, and then our marital life will become peaceful and refreshing every day.

**“God-assigned roles for man and woman, particularly for husband and wife, and these roles should not be interchanged in marital life.”**



DR. BINU DANIEL  
Dusseldorf, Germany

Dr. Binu Daniel is a management consultant, teacher, author, and educationist. He has written numerous articles in well-established English dailies on Economics and Management issues. He lives in Germany with his wife Reena and two daughters, Sharon and Naomi.



## Thriving in Marriage

**“MANY MARRIAGES END UP IN DIVORCES WHEN CHRIST HAS CEASED**

**LIVING IN THOSE MARRIAGES AND WHEN COUPLES DEAL WITH SPIRITUAL BATTLES INDEPENDENTLY WITHOUT DEPENDING ON CHRIST.”**

**T**here is excitement in the air as a bride and groom stand at the church to be married. A lot of happiness among the families, relatives, and friends. The occasion in itself, the memories, the promise of life to come. Two individuals who lived separate lives will inevitably be joined in holy matrimony till death parts them. The husband thanks God for his beautiful wife and wife likewise. Expectations of many years have come to fruition on this day. Now both of them will no longer live just for themselves but also for each other and the family they will create for themselves. They will carve out a family story of each other, tales they will share with their children, and children share that with their children. The testimonies of faith they will share down their lineage. It all starts at this point when they will be officially united under the umbrella of Holy matrimony. Immediately after the wedding, days are spent discovering each other. There is the excitement of sharing inner thoughts and secrets, likes and dislikes, dreams and aspirations – the two together to face the world

out there. Marriage, Bible defined in Song of Solomon as a walled garden filled with fragrance, filled with delicious fruits, spices, etc. – all self-contained.

However, as time progresses, you realize those small things add up. Casual words were spoken though not meant, not responding kindly, ignoring the other’s feelings, etc. Marriages are under Satanic attack, especially these days. The whole institution of marriage is eroding in the world today. As we read in Ephesians 6:12, *our battles are not with flesh and blood but against powers of this dark world and against spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms*. Many marriages end up in divorces when Christ has ceased living in those marriages and when couples deal with spiritual battles independently without depending on Christ. God guides us in the Book of Genesis, where He made man and woman in His own likeness. He gives both of them the responsibilities equally. But He created the woman when he said; it is not good for the man to remain alone; I will make a helper suitable for him. This is why *a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become*

*one flesh* (Gen 2:24).

In marriage, both husband and wife are on the same team and are doing life together. Tough circumstances they go through may have a way of tearing them down. This is where the wisdom of James 1:19 helps - *“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”* Listening & sharing concerns with each other and together is the way to overcome them. The blood of Jesus has redeemed both spouses, and they have the fruits of the Spirit in them. Apostle Paul gives us clear directions on how a marriage should be in Galatians 5:13-26,

where he addresses the passage to both brothers and sisters. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit”* (Gal 5:22-25). We need to ensure we display the fruit of the Spirit not just for us but also our spouses, our children, and to every person, we come in touch with.



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Binny Mathew is a finance professional in the Logistics industry. He lives in Singapore with his wife and two children. He was born and raised in the U.A.E. as a pastor’s son at Sharjah Pentecostal Assembly. He is serving God at Ebenezer Malayalam Fellowship church, Singapore.

# An Institution Ordained by God



“God has placed both men and women as stewards who don’t live for selfish motives **but look beyond and lead their life as a service or offering to God.**”

**M**arriage is an establishment ordained by God. To be more precise, marriage is the union of a man and woman to glorify God. God instituted marriage in the order of creation, which laid the foundation of human life. But unfortunately, liberal views of marriage have polluted the current society for the past few decades. Many a time, Christian Marriages are viewed more like a contract than a covenant. So it is high time that we look back at Scripture and be reminded of the Biblical perspective of marriage.

First of all, we need to understand the Biblical view of human gender. God created males and females in His image and likeness. He created a pattern of separation from the beginning, whether it was light and dark or sea and land. The same separation was instituted by God in human gender, too - absolutely complimentary, yet each gender is uniquely bearing God’s image. And in this way, God also wanted both men and women to represent the invisible God on earth. Along with representing God in his image distinctively, men and women also reflect God when joined together through marriage. Bible teaches us that through marriage, we become

fruitful, multiply and fill the earth and thereby spread the image of God all over the world.

A careful study of the Scriptures establishes that the woman was created not just as a companion for man but as a helper for him, so they could serve the purposes of God together. So, we need to remember that God has placed both men and women as stewards who don’t live for selfish motives but look beyond and lead their life as a service or offering to God. The relationship between Christ and his bride (Church) is the greater reality of Christian Marriages. As Christ loved the church by giving his own life, husbands ought to love their wives. The true love shown by Christ is the ultimate model for intimacy in marriage.

As Christ is the head of the church, so is the man expected to take leadership in the family. At the same time, man and woman ought to respect each other out of reverence for Christ. Mutual respect is central to the way the Bible envisions marriage. Of course, it does give a leadership role to the man within the home, but this is not an equation of domination; it is simply one where the differences with which God has created the two genders are appreciated and given the

environment to flourish. The role of a man in marriage is to lead the family, whereas a woman accepts and submits to the leadership and performs the role of a helper and maintains the family, which will indeed create a beautiful marriage.

Since men and women come from different families and, in some cases, different cultures, there are chances of problems and misunderstandings in marriage. If we look at statistics, the divorce rates are going high as time progresses. Communication is one of the critical aspects to nourish a successful marriage. In this fast-paced world, we may disregard the role of effective communication and take things for granted due to lack of time. That will hurt the marriage. God always intended companionship in marriage, which can persevere only through constructive communication. Productive communications can prevent misunderstanding. Communication also includes confession and forgiveness. Human hearts can be rigid amid struggles and troubles at times, but they can melt like wax through affectionate conversations.

Above all, every marriage can be successful only if God is being kept at the center. It is the grace of God that sustains any marriage.

We need to reflect on the gospel of Jesus Christ to nourish and cherish our marriage. The gospel transforms us, and as a response to the gospel, we can better serve God through the sanctity of marriage. The challenges, struggles, and even the joy of marriage can be used as occasions to come closer to God. Marriage is a sacred and successful institution, and there is no place for prejudice. Finally, let me conclude with a famous verse from 1 Corinthians 13:7 - *“Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.”*



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Cyril Philip is an IT professional, and writes gospel content for online Christian publications. He lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma with his wife Reeba and two sons. He serves God in the worship department at Bethel India Christian Assembly, Tulsa.



# A Lifetime Partnership

**“Sometimes all our partners need**  
is a listening ear rather than an advising tongue.”

**A** parent gave each of their children some paint; one of the children took those and just stored them carefully so that they would not be spoiled; the other child took the paints and began to paint a lovely picture on a plain piece of paper. Thriving in marriage is like the second child who started to make something beautiful from the paints his parents gave him. My few months of marriage are nothing compared to the married life of the readers, who have most likely been married for many years, but I am humbled to convey to you the things God taught me during these few months of marriage. Thriving in marriage is not the same as getting married. We thrive in marriage because we have Christ as the center of our married life.

A wedding is the beginning of a lifetime commitment of union between two imperfect people who previously lived very different lives. This union mirrors the union between God and His Church. Marriage is intended to reflect

our Creator’s unconditional love for the Church. It’s a love that will never forsake us. Aside from love, it is to be noted that faithfulness, swift forgiveness, patience, unity, and so on are some of the other vital characteristics of a Godly marriage. A life partner is like a teammate who works together with God on the many issues faced in life to build a godly marriage.

Communication is vital in marriage because it enables us to understand each other fully. Both listening and speaking are essential, but as noted in James 1:19, what is critical in this is listening. Sometimes all our partners need is a listening ear rather than an advising tongue. Pausing, listening to them, and submitting to God will empower both partners to make better decisions in a disagreement. At times, being a good listener may be just what our relationships require.

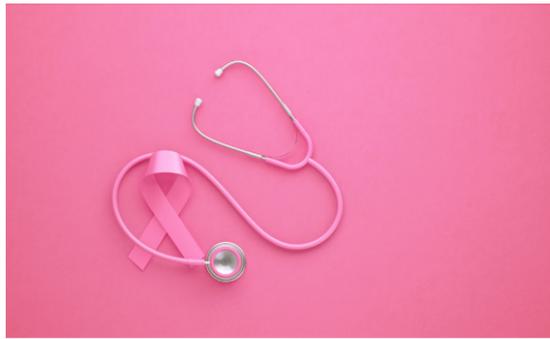
For a Godly marriage to be built, it is crucial to focus on God when one

is single, who will provide you with a Godly companion, resulting in a Godly marriage that allows you to stand and serve together for Christ. Likewise, as His Church is engaged to Christ, we are in union with the Spirit of God, leaving behind the things of the world and focusing to be swift in hearing God’s word, which leads us to a blameless bride in the day of His coming.



**GRACE KATHETTU**  
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# Breast Cancer



## WHAT IS BREAST CANCER?

Breast cancer is a group of diseases in which cells in breast tissue change and divide uncontrolled, typically resulting in a lump or mass.

## GOOD NEWS ABOUT BREAST CANCER TRENDS

Lately, due to the decline in prescriptive hormone replacement therapy after menopause, a gradual reduction in female breast cancer incidence rates among women aged 50 and older has been noticed. Death rates from breast cancer have been declining since about 1990, due to better screening and early detection, increased awareness, and continually improving treatment options.

## What are the signs and symptoms of breast cancer?

- Breast cancer typically has no symptoms when the tumor is small and most easily treated
- The most common physical sign is a painless lump.
- Less common signs and symptoms include breast pain or heaviness, persistent changes like swelling, thickening, or redness of the skin, and nipple changes like spontaneous discharge (especially if bloody), scaliness, or retraction. Any persistent change in the breast should be evaluated by a physician.

## Facts about Breast Cancer

- In 2021, an estimated 281,550 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women in the U.S. as well as 49,290 new cases of non-invasive (in situ) breast cancer.
- 63% of breast cancer cases are diagnosed at a localized stage (there is no sign that cancer has spread outside of the breast), for which the 5-year survival rate is 99%
- This year, an estimated 43,600 women will die from breast cancer in the U.S.
- Although rare, men get breast cancer too. In 2021, an estimated 2,650 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer in the U.S. and approximately 530 will die.
- 1 in 8 women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime.
- Breast cancer is the most common

cancer in American women, except for skin cancers. It is estimated that in 2021, approximately 30% of all new women's cancer diagnoses will be breast cancer.

- There are over 3.8 million breast cancer survivors in the United States.
- On average, every 2 minutes a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States. (National Breast Cancer Foundation, INC, 2021)

## Why October is called the pink month?

- Charlotte Haley, who had battled breast cancer, introduced the concept of a peach-colored breast cancer awareness ribbon in the early 1990s which in turn was adopted by different other companies who eventually changed the color to pink.
- People wear pink ribbons in October to honor survivors, and to remember those lost to the disease.
- The pink ribbon represents fear of breast cancer, hope for the future, and the charitable goodness of people and businesses who publicly support the breast cancer movement.
- It is intended to evoke solidarity with women who currently have breast cancer. (The story behind the pink ribbon (Cure today, October 2017)

## How to reduce the breast cancer risk?

- Keep a healthy weight.
- Exercise regularly.
- Don't drink alcohol, or limit alcoholic drinks.
- If you are taking, or have been told to take, hormone replacement therapy external icon or oral contraceptives external icon (birth control pills), ask your doctor about the risks and find out if it is right for you.
- Breastfeed your children, if possible.
- If you have a family history of breast cancer or inherited changes in your BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes, talk to your doctor about other ways to lower your risk (CDC,2021)

## Breast Cancer Screening Tests

- Mammogram
- MRI
- Clinical Breast Exam (CBE): The American Cancer Society no longer

recommends CBE for breast cancer screening in average-risk asymptomatic women based on the lack of clear benefits for CBE alone or in conjunction with mammography. Plus, there is some evidence that adding CBE to mammography screening increases the rate of false positives.

- Breast Self-Exam (BSE): Not recommended by ACS anymore but recommends Breast Self-Awareness. All women should become familiar with both the appearance and feel of their breasts and report any changes promptly to their physician (lump or other symptoms) (American Cancer Society, 2021)

## Guidelines for the early detection of breast cancer

- Women ages 40 to 44 should have the choice to start annual breast cancer screening with mammograms (x-rays of the breast) if they wish to do so.
- Women age 45 to 54 should get mammograms every year.
- Women 55 and older should switch to mammograms every 2 years or can continue yearly screening.
- Screening should continue as long as a woman is in good health and is expected to live 10 more years or longer.
- All women should be familiar with the known benefits, limitations, and potential harms linked to breast cancer screening. (American Cancer Society, 2021)



**PRIYA MATHEW**  
Family Nurse, Dallas, USA

Priya Mathew is a Family Nurse Practitioner and working in the Department of Endocrinology at a U.S. Government Hospital in Dallas. She has written Christian devotional songs in Malayalam. She is married to Wesley Mathew and resides in Dallas with their two children.

FROM THE HISTORY

## ALEXANDER CHANGED THE WORLD AT ARBELA

**T**he Macedonian troops were used to victory against serious odds. Their brilliant young commander, Alexander, had already won battle after battle in Europe, Asia, and Africa, often against numbers far superior to his own. A few years earlier they had left Macedonia and crossed into Asia, hoping for quick victories because they had almost no funds. Alexander's cavalry defeated the Persians on the banks of the Granicus River (in modern Turkey). Alexander and his Greek and Macedonian followers then turned south and took Tyre after a seven-month siege.

Egypt yielded quickly, the Egyptians hailing Alexander as a deliverer. Alexander stopped long enough to found the city of Alexandria. Then he turned east to face the Persians once more. Among his armies, many must have doubted his success in the coming clash. The Persians had massed a force of over 250,000 men. Alexander had only forty-seven thousand. Darius III, the Persian king, had even leveled and smoothed the plain of Arbela (Guagamela) for his chariots.

However skilled Alexander's army was, the sheer numbers of the enemy posed a threat. The Persians stood a good chance of getting their forces around the ends of the Greek army (that is, to flank it), which would allow the Persians to hit the Greeks both in front and behind. This would spell sure defeat for Alexander. Neither

Alexander nor the Persians knew that centuries earlier (according to Biblical chronology) -- Even before Darius I became king, much less Darius III -- a Jewish prophet named Daniel had foretold Alexander's success. Had the Persians known, they might have yielded without a fight and saved their lives rather than meet Alexander at Arbela on this day, October 1,331 B. C.

Daniel's prophecies foresaw the rise of the Greeks and their conquest of Persia. One prophecy said, "While I [Daniel] was observing, behold a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground ... and he came up to the ram ... and rushed at him in his mighty wrath ... and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him ..." The angel Gabriel told Daniel that the ram represented the Medes and Persians and the goat Greece.

Alexander saw the danger of the enemy lines that stretched beyond his. Something had to be done. For the first time as general, he broke off two reserve forces and placed one on each wing of his army to protect it against being flanked. He began the attack on his right.

The Persian numbers were so great that they came close to overwhelming the left and center of Alexander's line. But when the Persian cavalry



massed against Alexander's right, leaving their infantry uncovered in the center, Alexander led a charge that broke through. His men got behind the Persians and attacked them front and back. The Persians panicked and fled. At the loss of less than 500 of his men, Alexander slaughtered over 40,000 Persians.

The victorious Greeks imposed their culture on the mid-east. Koine Greek became widely spoken and it was in this language that the gospel was preached and the New Testament written.

Source: www.christianity.com

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## MONSON MAVUNKAL - A MONSTER IN THE MAKING



**TK NANDANAN**  
Freelance writer

It is true that Kerala is a leading state on many developmental fronts and is the highest literate state in India. Moreover, it has highly talented educated youth to take the state forward with broad visions. But notoriety struck it when a finagler disguised as an antique dealer started swindling rich Keralites of crores of Rupees. Monson Mavunkal, a native of Cherthala is the kingpin of a scam that swindled many political and corporate bigwigs and film celebrities. Thankfully, he spared the poor or the middle class, reminiscing the modus operandi of the legendary heroic outlaw Robin Hood or the famous outlaw Kayamkulam Kochunni.

Monson, the fraud antique dealer, claimed that his precious antique collection included the first edition of the Holy Bible, the books used by Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji, the last powerful Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, etc. Paradoxically, this highly literate state and politically

conscious people never harbored an iota of suspicion on him even when this conman sold Moses' staff. It may be recalled that 52-year-old Monson used a mixture of deceit, charm, and carefully cultivated influence on his potential clients to achieve his aim and thus became a millionaire. His sway spread far and wide as he constantly played shifting roles to hoodwink his customers. He assumed various roles of motivational speaker, doctor, cosmetologist, art promoter, antique collector, Youtuber, etc. Taking a cue from his dramatic life, the police personnel also scripted a plan to arrest him. So, they camouflaged themselves in plain clothes and swooped down on Monson and arrested him at a function to mark his daughter's engagement even as the local police station was kept in the dark about such a mission.

What intrigues us most is the fact that the trickster was able to win the confidence of the

top police officers including the Director-General of Police and they even fell prey to his trap let alone business, movie, and music celebrities and political leaders of different hues. After all, Monson forced and pushed every bigwig he came across in a convincing way with a three-piece suit and gift of gab to part with their stashed hard currencies to mint more money. In addition, some forged degrees to flaunt, he even taught the teachers that he was a great scholar although he was only a charlatan. Thus, he reigned like a king in an empire built by swindled wealth. However, after a decade, as a natural corollary to the riotous life he led, his further game plan and gimmicks fell flat and the curtain was downed on a thrilling yet sensational story of a scammer, who held some of the creamy Keralites under his spell.

TK Nandan, a freelance writer, is presently employed with an Indian Government Organization. Married to Jayasree, who is a nurse by profession, he lives in Kochi with their children. He is a regular contributor of articles to several English dailies in India.

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Continued from Page 01

## Eliminate intimacy killers in your marriage

### Trends in Marriage, Divorce, and Cohabitation (USA)\*

- Since 1970 marriages have declined 30%.
- Since 1970 divorces have increased 40%.
- Women are the first to file for divorce 65% of the time.
- Over 40% of first marriages end within 13 years.
- Over 20% of first marriages end within 5 years.
- Over 75% of divorced people get remarried.
- Second marriages fail 65% of the time.
- Premarital cohabitation increased 70% in the 1990's.
- Over 50% of premarital cohabitating couples split up within 5 years.
- Over 50% of marriages are preceded by premarital cohabitation

\*Trends in Marriage, Divorce, and Cohabitation based on data from the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia.

### The top intimacy killers in marriage:

1. Extreme stress and anger
2. Unresolved conflicts and unforgiveness
3. Negative communication
4. Dominating personality
5. In-laws negative interference

6. Phone/computer/internet addiction/ Pornography
7. Lust of money
8. Extramarital relationships
9. Work/ministry burnouts
10. Avoidance

These are the **toxins** of intimacy. We must learn to eliminate these intimacy killers in marriage. There are 4 types of negative communication patterns that can ruin your marriage: *criticism*, contempt, defensiveness and stonewalling. These negative communication patterns that predict relationship failure, according to Gottman. The most common pattern of negative communication is criticism: verbally attacking your spouse or children's character. No matter how wonderful your spouse or children are, you will probably always find things you could complain about. If criticism goes unchecked, it can turn into outright *contempt* for your spouse. This leads to despising your partner's sense of self with an intention to insult or emotionally abuse them such as badmouthing, hatefulness, lovelessness, and repulsion. The third one is *defensiveness*, seeing yourself as the victim in efforts to ward off a perceived attack and reverse the blame. A position of readiness to oppose actual or expected attack. Mr. Right and Mrs. Right. The fourth one is *stonewalling*: withdrawing from the relationship as a way to avoid conflict in efforts to convey disapproval, distance and separation.

Marital success and growth depends on how marital challenges are handled. How can you avoid these toxins and negative communications

in your marriages? Instead of criticizing your spouse, start complimenting your spouse. Treat each other with respect and show appreciation. Accept responsibility for your part. Take a break and cool off, then come back to the conversation. Start cooperating, think about resolving conflicts. Convey approval, cooperation. As you look for the four negative communication patterns in your family and try to use the positive communication patterns instead, you will begin to experience true intimacy and love in your family. Better communication always means a better marriage.

It is my conviction that many of these struggles can be avoided if couples take time to rule out the intimacy killers thoroughly and seek timely help as needed. First, eliminate the intimacy killers, the **toxins** of intimacy. Second, make sure that your marriage is built on a covenant, which is the **foundation** of your marriage. Third, evaluate if your communication pattern is *honest* and *loving*, which is the **key** for intimacy. Fourth, scope out your personality and make sure that you are always kind to your spouse, which is the **main ingredient** of intimacy. Finally examine your love patterns and make sure you are not a controlling or dominating person, which is the **life-line** for intimacy.

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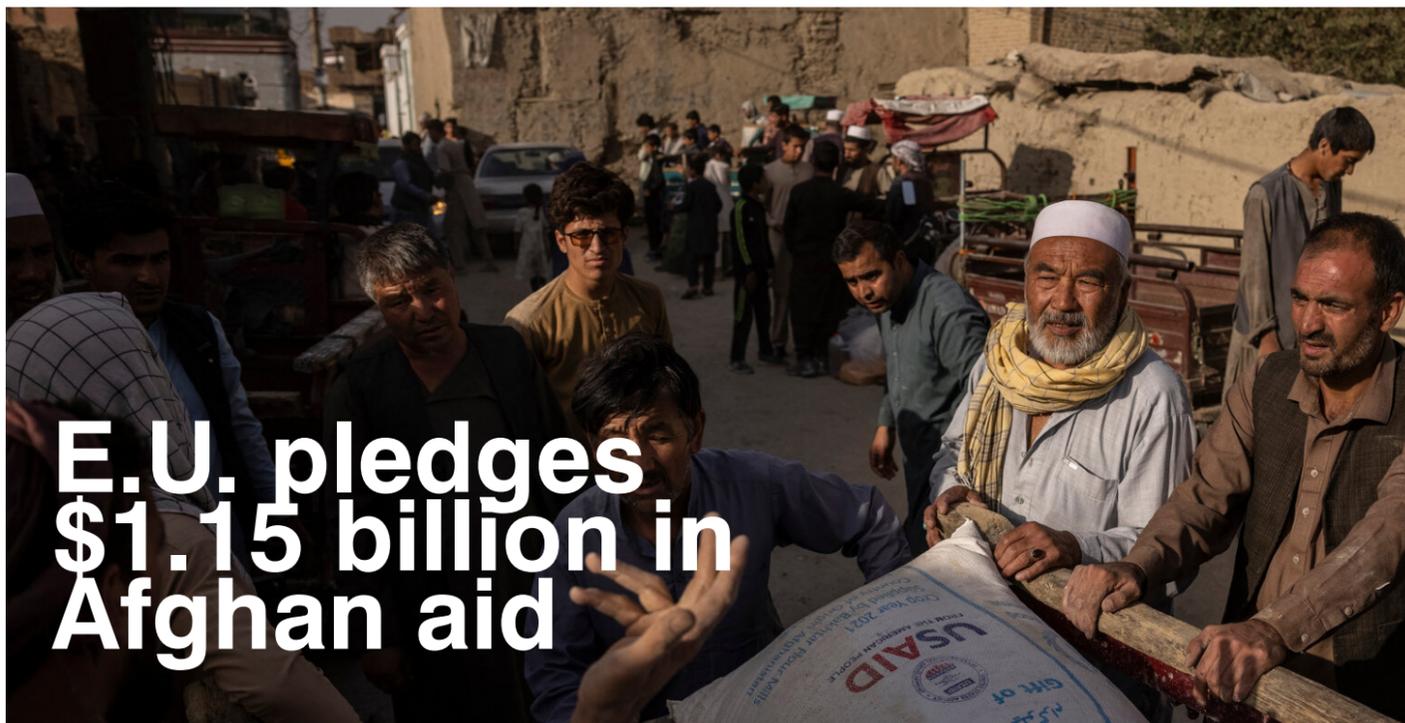
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"MOVE TO WHAT MOVES YOU"

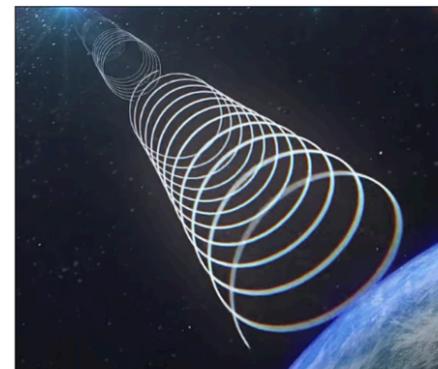


## E.U. pledges \$1.15 billion in Afghan aid

The European Union is offering stopgap humanitarian aid for Afghanistan, which is on the brink of collapse. World leaders met virtually on Tuesday to discuss ways to prevent an economic and humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan even as support is affirmed for human rights and stability in the country. The Biden administration did not announce any new American aid though it had two meetings with Taliban officials over the past few days. Most international aid to the country has been cut off since August when the Afghan government collapsed, and the Taliban took power. The E.U. funding is considered to be at best

a temporary solution to the enormous need of the nation of 30 million whose financial system is on the verge of collapse. Experts consider the possibility of more radicalism within Afghan borders if further social chaos results from financial breakdown. A shattered banking and payment system could severely complicate the distribution of foreign aid. It could set off refugee flows to Europe, which is still grappling with the migrant surge over the past decade that has destabilized governments and fueled far-right nationalism.

## World News



### Mysterious radio waves in Milky Way

According to a new study published in *The Astrophysical Journal*, some astronomers from across the world have detected mysterious radio waves coming from the center of the Milky Way using the CSIRO radio telescope in Western Australia. Ziteng Wang, the lead author of the study, said that they initially believed the waves could result from a spinning dead star but found that its signal didn't match what they expected from such pulsars. Wang informed that the strangest property of this new signal is its very high polarization which means that its light oscillates in only one direction, but that direction rotates with time. The brightness of the object also varies much by a factor of 100, which scientists have never seen before. The astronomers detected six radio signals from the source over nine months in 2020. They found that the signals do not fit any currently understood patterns of radio sources, which could mean that these waves are coming from a new stellar object. Scientists are continuing to keep an eye out for more clues of what the source might be.

### Russia says Taiwan is part of China

Russia is further aligning with China against the U.S. and has come out stating its position that the self-ruling island of Taiwan is a part of the mainland-based People's Republic of China. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated that Russia's stance is like the overwhelming majority of other countries in considering Taiwan to be part of China. Only 14 countries today, along with the Vatican, have diplomatic relations with Taipei. As the U.S. has turned its sights toward the Asia-Pacific region, Russian officials have more readily criticized the U.S. for building a coalition with Australia, India, and Japan under the banner of a free and open Indo-Pacific, but its primary objective is to contain China.



### Aspirin use is recommended to be curtailed

A U.S. panel of experts has advised that doctors should no longer start most people at risk of heart disease on a daily regimen of low-dose aspirin. This recommendation on baby aspirin would apply to people younger than 60 who were at high risk of heart disease for whom the daily regimen of the mild analgesic was previously seen as a tool to prevent a first heart attack or stroke. The proposed guidelines would not apply to those already taking aspirin or those who have already had a heart attack. The recommendation comes on the back of the study, which found mounting evidence that the risk of serious side effects such as life-threatening bleeding far outweighs the earlier perceived benefits. Aspirin prevents the formation of blood clots that can block arteries. Still, various studies have brought the concern that its regular intake also increases the risk of bleeding, especially in the digestive tract and the brain.

### IMF suggests more Crypto oversight



The International Monetary Fund's Financial Stability Board has identified the crypto space at risk from hacking and lack of transparency, which may lead to outages during periods of extreme volatility. Even though the risks are contained, for now, the IMF has urged regulators to monitor cryptocurrencies and keep them in check. In its Global Financial Stability Report released on Tuesday, the IMF said that the adoption of crypto assets and stable coins in emerging markets and developing economies could pose serious challenges to the macroeconomic and financial stability of those countries. As crypto space expands and grows, new sources of risk also emerge, such as stable coins and decentralized finance. Even as more than half of all central banks in the world are purportedly exploring how to launch digital currencies, the recommendation from the IMF is to have lawmakers implement global standards on crypto assets and to enhance the ability to monitor the crypto ecosystem by addressing any data gaps.

### Samsung announces Unpacked 2 event

Following the Apple event expected on October 18th where many are expecting the announcement of new MacBook Pros, and Google's virtual Pixel 6 launch on 19th, Samsung will be holding an online event on Wednesday, the 20th called "Galaxy Unpacked Part 2" which is possibly for the announcements of new Galaxy phones and iterations on existing ones. Samsung's newsroom post hints at some kind of personalization for Galaxy devices, which could mean new colors or maybe a full-on customization option.